

# The Washington Guitar Society Newsletter

Number 73 Autumn 2005

WGS

**Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948)**  
by John Patykula

*(Editor's note: The author of this series of articles is an Assistant Chair and Coordinator of the Guitar Program in the Department of Music at Virginia Commonwealth University with the rank of Associate Professor.)*

My interest in the music of Manuel Maria Ponce began in 1968 when I was still in high school. I was preparing to audition to get into the North Carolina School of the Arts where Jesús Silva, a protege of Andres Segovia, taught. I was working on a Carcassi etude, two or three Sor studies, and a few short pieces by Tarrega. My teacher at that time suggested I learn some of the Ponce Preludes. I found this music very different, yet strangely beautiful. I knew nothing of Ponce except what I could find in the jacket notes on the back of the Segovia LP's.

By some good fortune, I passed my audition was accepted into the program at the N.C. School of the Arts for the 1969 academic year. I became a student of Jesús Silva—and remained a student of his until his death in 1996. Silva had been a student at the National Conservatory in the 1930's, where he studied harmony and aesthetics with Ponce. Ponce was one of the jurors for his graduating recital. During this time, Silva became almost a son to Ponce, who had no children. Silva was often invited to the Maestro's home, especially when Andres Segovia

was visiting on one of his numerous world-tours. In his Reminiscences of Manuel M. Ponce, written for Guitar Review at the death of the composer, Silva writes: "...my memory is filled with the recollections of the wonderful moments which Destiny allowed me to pass with so beloved a teacher. Ponce-Maestro—always a open fountain in whatever related to his knowledge—ready always to offer a fruitful drink not only from the source of his art, but from every aspect of his life—which I considered an unmerited treasure of his friendship, and because of which my soul could often delight in listening to the interesting and beautiful stories of his life—and because so many took place in the company of his beloved friend "Andres"—Andres Segovia, who was, as Ponce's wife and tender companion said, "The friend of his soul."

"It is easy to imagine the great significance these conversations had and will have for me—what I learned from the closeness and intimacy of their presence—of their outstanding lives—two teachers—the lightest detail of their art and life being for me a magnificent lesson."

Often, Segovia would spend two to three weeks in Mexico City, giving up to six concerts during that period. Because of this special relationship between

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**From the Desk of the Editor**  
by Bob Wysong

I am pleased to announce that Keith Fillipu, who wrote the article in the last WGS newsletter about hand anatomy, will be the featured performer at the November 18, 2005 WGS meeting at the Chevy Chase Community Center. There will also be a WGS Open Stage on October 21 for those wanting to share their talents with other members. We all had a great time at the last meeting in August when a new member, Charles Mokotoff, played Barrios, and variations on the Japanese melody Sakurai. Bill Dykes and friends played Bach minuets, jazz improvizations, and yours truly rounded out the session with selections from Bach Cello Suite #1.



**From Bach to Rock**

by John Patykula  
Bob Anderson, once known for his Bach and Scarlatti interpretations while he was a guitar major at VCU during the late 1990's, is now pursuing a different path. He is currently in California playing in Tommy Lee's band. Bob recently appeared on the Tonight Show with Jay Leno and on Comedy Central's roast of Pamela Anderson. He is still playing his classical guitar, which he says "is still very satisfying."